"If I could mix drinks like my grandfather I would be worth marrying" [1]: Reading race, class and gender in Mrs H. Graham Yearwood's *West Indian and Other Recipes* (1911 and 1932)

Mrs H. Graham (E.A.C.) Yearwood's 1911 *West Indian and Other Recipes*, republished in a second edition in 1932, is unusual in being an early West Indian cookbook, compiled by a prominent white Creole woman in Barbados. Very few early cookbooks have survived a fragile archive in a West Indian context and, to this day, West Indians tend to eschew written or printed recipes in favour of individual culinary improvisation and/or oral family traditions. This article discusses the light shed by this cookbook on an often-overlooked minority tradition of written recipes produced by and for the "white elite" Eurocreole and colonial expatriate community of Barbados. Yearwood's text reveals much about the culinary and material culture and codes of a colonial society starkly divided along class, gender and racial lines, and about an elite eager to gain cultural and culinary capital and to consume material goods as a sign of upward social mobility.

Keywords: cookbooks; Barbados; Euro-creole; oral tradition; material culture; Austin Clarke; George Lamming.

Mrs H. Graham (E.A.C.) Yearwood's cookery book, *West Indian and Other Recipes* (Yearwood1911; Yearwood 1932) is that rare thing: an early West Indian cookbook. It is a collection of over 2,300 written recipes from mainly female contributors which was compiled by a prominent white creole woman[2] on the island of Barbados in the early decades of the 20th century. It is rare because very few early cookbooks have survived a fragile archive in a West Indian context, and rare because, to this day, West Indians tend to eschew written or printed recipes in favour of individual culinary improvisation and/or family traditions which are, first and foremost, oral in transmission. As novelist Austin Clarke (1999), born in 1934, recalls of his Barbadian childhood in the late 1930s and early 1940s:

> the word “recipe” did not exist in the Barbados of my youth. As a boy was surrounded by women – mother, countless aunts, women cousins and all the neighbourhood women, my mother’s friends – women who were all continuously involved in some confounding and miraculous feat in the kitchen. In all that time, and with all those women, I never once heard one of them use the word “recipe”. (5)

Clarke’s “Barbadian Memoir” *Pig Tails ‘n Breadfruit* traces his own early life and the history of his island nation through its food, not as “hot-cuisine” (1999, 1) as his mother dismissively dubbed “food cooked by foreigners” but as an African-derived cuisine which preserves many of “the rituals of slave food”. In the opening pages he reflects:

> It is ironical to be suggesting a book about food cooked in Barbados, because in every self-respecting Barbadian household the woman (who does most of the cooking whether she is wife, daughter or maid) would not be caught dead with a cookbook. To read a cookbook would suggest that she has not retained what her mother taught her; that she does not know how to cook; that she does not know how to take care of her man; that her mother had neglected to teach her how to “handle herself” in the kitchen, how “to do things” properly. (3)

In other words, to a Barbadian of Clarke’s generation and his (African Caribbean) ethnicity, cookbooks do not belong to or in the world of women, kitchens and their cooking. Instead, orally transmitted culinary practices are to be found situated within a complex matrix of codes of tradition, taste -- and, above all, respectability -- determined by race, class and gender. Thus, when Clarke declares that “there was never, and still is not, a cookbook in my mother’s house”, he does so approvingly and in a way which references and affirms a whole unwritten set of values and ways of conducting oneself in relation to others, not just a set of culinary practices.

Similar things can be said of *West Indian and Other Recipes*, though its respective values, tastes, and codes of respectability are rather more explicitly represented through the printed text and accompanying advertising paratexts to its two editions. The very existence of this early printed recipe book is testament to the energetic collation by its author but also, it should be noted, her ease of access to existing networks of affluent or "well-to-do" contributors and subscribers, as well as to the substantial cultural and economic capital of the white elite of the island, the group with which she most closely identified. Mrs Yearwood's recipe book was first published in 1911 by the *Agricultural Reporter,* St Michael's, Barbados. It originated as a fundraising publication for a Children's Home for "poor and destitute children" set up in 1876 with the donation of a plot of land on the island by a Miss Isabella Busby from Strathclyde, Scotland. Mrs Yearwood acted as a patron of the Home throughout her life and, at her request, the home was renamed "The Bessie Yearwood Home for Children" after her death in 1915. It still exists as a Children's Home in Barbados. As an early social welfare project which Yearwood and her friends chose to support, it is also significant as an early act of women's organization on the island. (Hamilton 1981)

Despite the tentative tone of Yearwood's prefatory comments to the first edition of 1911, the cookbook survived until at least 1932 when it was published in a new edition by the local Advocate Press, itself established in Barbados in 1895.[3] As such, the text is exceptionally important in shedding light on an often-overlooked minority tradition of written recipes and cookbooks produced by and for a distinct ethnic group on this island: that of the "white elite" Euro-Creole and colonial expatriate community of early 20th-century Barbados. Crucially, although a printed text, *West Indian and Other Recipes* it is also key in being one of the very first – if not *the* first - recording and transcription of earlier Barbadian/Caribbean foodways and food practices, which hitherto had existed only outside of print culture, in the oral tradition. Indeed, in 2013, on the occasion of the book's 80th anniversary, The Barbados

Museum and Historical Society (of which Bessie's husband had been a prominent and supportive member) described the 1911 collection of recipes as:

> the earliest if not the earliest compendium of Barbadian/Caribbean cuisine. The recipes described in the book represent centuries of epicurean heritage in Barbados and the Caribbean. The book is replete with recipes such as: Bread Fruit, Cocoanut Cakes, Corn and Oil, ginger beer, Sorrel Drink, Black pudding, Bathsheba Pancakes, Conkies, Sponge Cake and Guava Jelly to name a few. ("Mrs Graham Yearwood's Cookbook", n.p.)

It went on to reflect:

> Many of the featured recipes are still used today and variations of them would have been reinterpreted by Barbadian culinary experts such as the late Carmeta Frazer and Marion Hart who have advocated (and still advocates in the case of Marion Hart) the use of Barbados' culinary heritage not only to feed Barbadians but also to use it as a means to attract tourists to Barbados. Truly ironic especially in this new era where food independence and culinary tourism are being promoted as essential to Barbados' future! (n.p.)

This article argues that as a written text from a primarily oral culture – a text which transcribes primarily orally transmitted culinary practices and includes paratextual advertisements for local businesses, *West Indian and Other Recipes* presents a fascinating early document which reveals much about the material culture, tastes and codes of respectability of a colonial society starkly divided along class, gender and racial lines. In particular, it sheds light on the Euro-Creole elite (to which Bessie Yearwood belonged) and

the networks of a growing black and mixed-race middle class eager to gain cultural and culinary capital and to consume material goods as a sign of their upward social mobility. In this sense, the cookbook acts as both a "missive and [a] commodity to be bought" (Irving 2015, 178) as well as signaling the close relationship of print culture in this period to the wider "world of business" (204).

I approach the two editions of *West Indian and Other Recipes* (1911 and 1932) in their entirety, reading the prefaces, recipes and advertising paratexts in relation to each other, following the methodology adopted by recent critics of literary and material culture in the early 20th-centrury Caribbean, such as Gemma Irving (2015). I argue, following Irving's important scholarship on Caribbean literary magazines of the early 20th century, that:

> the paratextual elements of the [cookbook] provide a wealth of information about the material conditions of [cookery] writing, reading, printing and publishing in the West Indies, which in turn, shape our understanding of the [culinary culture] of the [early decades of the twentieth century. (Irving 2015, 203).

That many of the recipes included in the cookbook are attributed to particular individuals,[4] including several men and a named cook (Cook Harris), is in itself significant and provides evidence of a network of contributors and readers existing and developing across the island and beyond. It would be quite reasonable to assume that Mrs Yearwood's recipe book might be exclusively Euro-Creole in perspective, firmly in line with the social class and the ethnicity of both its author and the majority of the contributors and supporters. Yet, in her preface to both editions, Yearwood makes clear that she has "tried to compile a useful book, principally of old West Indian recipes, many of which were being forgotten in the rush for new things […] it is not supposed to be in any way an up to date cooking book" (n.p.).

Indeed, this emphasis on older culinary traditions in Barbados and the need to capture foodways which were "being forgotten" makes it a potentially very important source. This article argues that far from representing only a narrow version of Euro-Creole culinary cultures, the cookbook provides some evidence of an African-centred or African-derived cuisine and a more pluralistic Caribbean culinary culture coexisting with the colonially-inflected Anglophile recipes. Likewise, in the advertising paratexts to the two editions, an interesting reflection of wider cultural tastes and patterns of consumption emerges, as well as an interesting representation of the African Caribbean cook.

Barbadian national identity: Flying fish and cou-cou

The national dish of Barbados is generally considered to be Flying fish and Cou Cou, as Austin Clarke explains, with characteristically playful but also proprietorial "small-islander" wit:

> Every Wessindian [sic] island would claim that they invent cou-cou. Don't believe them. Cou-cou, along with other elements of superior cultural and gastronomical significance [...] have all been born, invented, started first or originated in] ...] Barbados. [...] It is historical fact that in Barbados, the slaves were the first people to cook and eat cou-cou. [...] And you'll need something more. Cou-cou is culturally associated with flying fish (100–101, 110)

Cou Cou is a "one pan" dish of cornmeal and water, stirred with a "coo stick", to which okra and a little butter is often added.[5] It was almost certainly brought to the Caribbean by

Africans, regularly eaten by slaves and promoted by Afro-Creole cooks and thus has a long and important heritage. Candice Goucher (2013) argues that:

> Africans generally preferred plantain to corn but through global exchange and trade with West Africa, they started to substitute corn (maize) for the starchy pounded yam and plantain of their native cuisines even before slaves were exported to the Caribbean. There "the West African-inspired cook" – a crucial figure of culinary transmission and creolization – "learned to lovingly prepare the new world vegetable as *kenke* or *dokono, funghi* or *coo* by boiling or steaming in banana leaves. (73)

"Turning cuckoo" -- that is making the accompanying "dry food" dish of cuckoo (or cou cou/coo coo) -- has special status as a signifier of Bajan identity. The ability to cook it well (especially as a quality in a prospective female partner) and the wooden "cou-cou" stick used to stir it to a perfect consistency are highly prized (Clarke 1999, 103–109); indeed, the stick is often used as a metonym for a potentially perfect cou cou. This kind of coded affirmation of particular national, ethnic and gendered identities in a Caribbean context is often reflected in the region's literary texts. Barbadian novelist, George Lamming also grew up on the island in the 1930s. Towards the end of his classic bildungsroman and study of colonial life, *In the Castle of My Skin* (Lamming 1953), he describes the preparation, cooking and eating of a final, special meal of flying fish and cou cou before a son departs from his home island of Barbados for Trinidad. The mother comments to her son:

> An' when I think to myself,' she said, 'that it is probably the last good meal I'll give you in this life my heart hurts me to think that that vagabond [a black cat] nearly walk

off with my fish. ‘Cause when you’ll get a meal like this again only God knows’ […]

‘I think they cook in Trinidad,’ I said. […] ‘They cook all over the world,’ she said, ‘but ‘tis how an’ how they cook. If you think cookin’ is putting a pot on the fire an’ leavin’ it till it tell you to come, you make a sad mistake. There be people who eat all sort o’ jumble up mess and they call it cookin’ too. An’ once they got a hole in their face to stuff, they couldn’t care less what an’ what they stuff it with. But if you think that’s cook’ you make a sad mistake.’

‘I suppose they have their own kind of cooking,’ I said. ‘Those I see look quite healthy, and when they come her to play cricket sometimes they win.’

‘’Tis a different thing,’ my mother said, ‘as far as I gather they eat out in restaurant an’ cook shop and God only knows what. But when it comes to cookin’ a good an’ proper meal in their own home they don’t know how to start. An’ on the back of it, they…say they more modern than the others in the other islands.

Most o’ them, an’ particularly the young ones, don’t know what an’ what a home mean…they ask you to go to the Chinese restaurant, or this hotel or that hotel, an’ they eat their guts full. But yu never get one o’ them to say come home, let my mother or wife prepare you a meal…Here the first thing we do to a stranger is give him something to eat home […] you want him to eat something you cook your own self. ‘Tis the opposite with them, an all because they got a generation of damn lazy young women who can’t do one God blessed thing but expose themselves in front of a mirror and go out like a cat baiting rat…they don’t know what the inside of a kitchen look like. (260–261)

Here, as in many Caribbean literary texts (Goodison 1986, 2007, Clarke 1999, Nichols 1984), food symbolizes the nurturing power and guidance of the mother and the mother symbolizes "home"- biological, cultural and national. The mother's suspicion of other islanders' cuisine (here Trinidadians) and their apparent embrace of modernity (eating out rather than cooking at home) is predicated on her own defence of small island "tradition" and configured through a series of gendered, class, national and cultural signifiers. Appropriately enough in a passage in which the mother warns the young G that "everything in a skirt ain't clean" (Lamming 1953, 263) the mother closely associates female propriety with the ability to make home ("know what the inside of a kitchen look like") and to cook a "proper" home-cooked meal. These are typically middle class, colonially-informed constructions of femininity and of the kitchen as a female gendered space which, in a moment of spectacular generational and inter-island rivalry, the mother suggests the bacchanal-loving young women of Trinidad cannot possibly live up to. The possibility that such women may offer something more alluring than maternal love and the pull of her "home food" is one that the mother tries hard to repress but which G nonetheless detects.

Interestingly, the novel describes in great detail the preparation and serving of this meal of flying fish and cuckoo from G's perspective, rather than the mother's and in not altogether positive terms. Rather mischievously (given that it appears on the Barbadian coat of arms as a signifier of national identity), the Mother intimates that flying fish may be something even non-Barbadians can make. That G finds the preparation of cou "a very tedious undertaking" (Lamming 1953, 266) could be read as reflecting his separation from the maternally-dominated world of his childhood and his embarkation on a wider journey beyond the confines of the past and all that the island space represents to him. In Indo-Trinidadian Ramabai Espinet's (1994) short story "Indian Cuisine", cou cou is marked as African-Caribbean "creole food" and is thus rejected by the Indo-Caribbean mother. Food

and sex are linked as “eating cou” comes to represent the father’s sexual transgressions with a creole woman who cooks him this dish. That the daughter “transgresses” by adopting cou cou in her own culinary explorations thus marks her increasing distance from her mother’s culinary narratives and the Indo-Caribbean traditions it represents, and a growing sense instead of an independent and creolized identity.

Culinary categories, taste and ethnicity

Mrs Yearwood’s recipe book features multiple recipes for flying fish; fried, steamed and flying fish soups are all included in the fish and soup sections but these are never connected to cou cou, which is unindexed and included in a late section called “Other Breakfast Dishes”. Likewise, the classic West Indian dishes of Pepperpot and Souse are also, somewhat puzzlingly, classified as “Other Breakfast Dishes”, whilst a recipe for one of the most quintessential dishes of the region, “Rice and Peas”, is to be found in “Breakfast and Luncheon Dishes”. Starchy staples such as roasted yam, breadfruit and the dumpling-like conkies are found in both sections. Yearwood’s categorization of her recipes throughout both editions is overwhelming Eurocentric rather than based on the traditional cooking or pairing of ingredients in a West Indian context and she makes no attempt to give histories of particular dishes. Indeed, the most striking things about her cookbook is its almost total disregard for pairing dishes traditionally cooked and eaten together or for distinguishing the cuisines associated with different ethnicities. Thus English-sounding dishes such as “Sponge Cake” or “Eggs and Ham” are included alongside ones using characteristically Caribbean ingredients and foodways: the classic French “Onion Soup” is placed without comment alongside the other more local “Turtle Soup” [Yearwood 1932, 7]) Only when it is absolutely necessary to distinguish European ingredients from local ones are any distinctions made, as in the reference to “English potatoes” and, rather perplexingly, “English Haggis”.

There is also a conspicuous absence of Indo-Caribbean or Chinese Caribbean foods. Thus, there are no rotis or bhagees in Mrs Yearwood's cookbook, which may suggest her contributors' and her own lack of contact with Indo-Caribbean cooks and their more rurally based communities. The only nod to Indian derived foodways is a recipe for "A Good Curry" (Yearwood 1932, 24) and "Madras Savoury" which, like many Anglo-Indian recipes of the period, suggest the rather "safer" (because known) addition of a teaspoon each of curry powder and chutney to a savoury topping for hot toast. (48) Such an omission may well be a matter of taste. Certainly, colonial cookbooks from other parts of the globe focus on "plain cooking" and plain food as a virtue (as opposed to the "tempting" connotations of spicy food) (O'Brien 2016, 144), as well as the health-giving qualities of plain food for invalids and the convalescing. When Austin Clarke notes his mother complaining about the tendency for bland food amongst "plantation people", the Euro-Creoles, he stumbles upon an area in which the white elite could delimit their own identity in terms of taste, via their use of certain seasonings and spices:

> It was a well-known fact in Barbados that plantation people, most of whom were white, did not put "enough seas'ning, nor salt and pepper in their food!" my mother use do say, "their food too damn bland. Enough to give a person the belly! As if they're suffering from *low* blood pressure!" (Clarke 1999, 19–20)

However, the lack of Indo-Caribbean recipes in Yearwood's cookbook may also reflect the limits of Yearwood's access to network of cooks of different ethnicities. That African-derived recipes and foodways are represented in the cookbook is most likely to be due to access to the same via the figure of the African-Caribbean cook, employed in some of the white elite's households and kitchens.

Indeed, in the second edition of the text, a particularly striking half-page advert for cooking essences from Bruce Weatherhead's pharmacy features a black and white cartoon of black cook and her white "missus" in a domestic, kitchen setting. The cook is obviously caricatured in both body frame and attire: she is sturdy and exaggerated, her muscular arms accentuated by her rolled up sleeves, her head and her single eye in profile represented out of all proportion to the rest of her body. She wears a check dress and apron but her headgear is ambiguous, somewhere between a chef's white hat and a traditional African-style headwrap. However, it is her stance which is most interesting: she is holding aloft a sizeable rolling pin over her cowering white employer as if she is about to strike her. The tagline makes clear the message: "Inferior Flavouring ESSENCES reflects on COOKS, so They Demand WEATHERHEAD'S!" Here the Afro-Creole cook is in charge, although the white employer still holds the purse strings. Even the syntax of this advert retains traces of ostensibly Afro-Caribbean speech forms in the lack of subject-verb agreement between 'essences' and 'reflects'.[6]

Interestingly, the accompanying advert on the same page suggests a different demographic, although race and ethnicity are neatly invisibilized when it addresses "The HOUSEWIFE":

> The HOUSEWIFE who pays attention to detail in connection with the various Recipes in this splendid Cookery Book will earn the gratitude of those she is responsible for feeding. The gratitude will be everlasting if the ingredients are obtained from J. & R [Johnson & Redman Modern Grocers, Bakers etc.]. (Yearwood 1932, n.p.)

"Everything foreign being better than local": Colonial contexts, material culture and consumption

Both editions include identical prefaces by Yearwood herself and introductory guides to cooking. In a nod to the conventions of the European cookbook, Yearwood includes a detailed introductory guide to the principles of cooking, taken from Phyllis Browne's *A Year's Cookery: Giving Dishes for Breakfast, Luncheon and Dinner, for Every Day in the Year, with Practical Instructions for Their Preparation* ([1879] 1910). This includes "rules" for cooking and getting the best use from your oven, detailed instructions for boiling, frying, puddings, grilling and even a non-culinary "odds and ends" section. Such a strategy of including quotations from an earlier text was not uncommon in colonial cookbooks. Indeed. Charmaine O' Brien (2016, 142), in her study of 19th-century colonial Australian cookbooks, notes the borrowing and incorporation of "principles of roasting, boiling, stewing and baking" from classic English cookbooks such as the massively popular *Modern Cookery for Private Families* by Eliza Acton ([1845] 1858). In this way, colonial writers sought to legitimize their texts by stressing a thoroughly British pedigree, their culinary cultures grounded in a thoroughly "historic understanding of English food and cookery" (O'Brien 2016, 142). As O'Brien notes, the "aspiration of most colonial cooks was the reproduction of English cookery. […] there is an evident canon of recipes and techniques across [colonial] works and their authors were all drawing from each other and from earlier works" (142).

Both editions of *West Indian and Other Recipes* carry full and part-page advertisements; in the first edition at both beginning and end, and in the second edition at the beginning only. In the first edition, a greater number of adverts are directed at general goods and services – millinery, hosiery, dress goods and tailoring, "fine apparel", "postcards, curios and souvenirs", Kodak photography supplies, as well as holiday and leisure pursuits: garages, hotels, livery stables, steamship and packets tours as far afield as New York and Norway as well as advertising of a culinary nature – stoves, cleaning products silver plate, drinks, essences, tea. Such paratexts, read alongside the recipes, suggests an affluent and

cosmopolitan readership – perhaps even a touristic market - for the cookery book; indeed, Mr Graham Yearwood took advantage of opportunities to travel by sea, travelling to both England and New York.

What is most apparent in the first edition is the greater focus on imported foreign goods, a common colonial phenomenon as regards material culture and especially foodstuffs consumed by the white elite which is to be found the earliest period of settlement to the 20th century. Thus, for example, J.R. Bancroft emphasizes the modernity and international reach of his business (as opposed to a narrow, small island provincialism) by announcing that "every steamer from Europe and New York brings us a shipment of the best productions of the best Drapery goods from England, Ireland, France, Germany, Switzerland. US, American and Peru". Indeed, in this first edition, a number of advertisers address the audience of the cookbook as cooks and consumers. Thus, Bon Marche ("For dry goods") of Broad Street, Bridgetown, boldly declares "TWO THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW; HOW TO COOK AND WHERE TO BUY". In smaller and lower-case text, it proclaims: "this book instructs you as to the first. We can instruct you as to the second". The clear message is that cooks are also consumers and that cash payment secures "special discounts". Codes of respectability and social ascendancy prevail in the none-too-veiled suggestion (after a small picture of a small, lace-trimmed, politely pointing, female hand) that: "Our customers are our best Advertisements". The suggestion is that only the best customers buy the best goods and that to be able to buy such quality goods suggest belonging to a certain privileged group of consumers.

Only two advertisers appear in both editions of *West Indian and Other Recipes*: Johnson & Redman Stores and Da Costa & Co. The 1911 advert for Da Costa & Co. emphasizes "economy in cooking", in its advert for the "NEW revival or Caledonian stove". Very few would be able to afford domestic stoves in Barbados at this time. Austin Clarke

compares the simple stoves and fireplaces of the Barbadian poor (1999, 16–19) with the larger, better-equipped kitchens of the plantation houses and mentions the modernizing of some kitchens on the island only as a much later post-second World War phenomenon (21). Moreover, making a virtue of economy is arguably a respectable middle-class virtue rather than the "making do" or "eking out" characteristic of the Afro-Creole working class and the rural peasantry of both Indian and African heritage. This is made most explicit in the detailed list of consumables which follows the advert for the Caledonian stove, subheaded "Real Comfort in the Home":

> Roast Fowl, Boiled Rabbit, Oysters, Lobsters, Sardines, Herrings, Tart Fruit, Gelatine, Cornstarch, peas, Haricot bests [sic], String Beans, Sweet Com [sic], Carrots, Lazenby's Soups, Hams, Bacon, Cooking Prunes, Sauces, Cooking Wines, Pepper and Spices etc. Still and Sparkling Wines, liqueurs of the best quality, Fry's Cocoa, Cadbury's Cocoa, Van Houten's Cocoa, Runkle's Cocoa.[7]

It is followed by a list of sundry tonics and restoratives, described as having "health in every drop": "Bovril, Brands, essence of beef, Valentine meat juice, Vibrona, Bovril wine, St Raphael Wine, beef, iron and Wine".

This detailed list gives a fascinating insight into the dietary habits and commercial brands available to those with the money to buy them in Barbados at this time. Overall, this is a list of considerable variety and choice, not to say luxury. Most interesting, perhaps, is the emphasis on English colonial brands that was often indicative of a wider privileging of foreign imported goods, then and now -- what the Caribbean writer Grace Nichols (1996) has referred to as "Everything foreign being better than local" (24) They are a reminder that the Empire was primarily a commercial enterprise and that brands such as Cadbury's, Fry's or Bovril were as well known in the West Indian colonies as they were in Britain. Austin Clarke

similarly notes the important social status in buying food from abroad (1999, 37) and describes the imported items at his aunt's house (15). More pragmatically he notes the importance of "shipments from Canada":

> in colonial times [...] practically all the foods we uses to eat had to come from Away – from England, Canada and Australia. Since colonizes people was considered second-class to the people from away, the food was also second-class, or of an inferior quality. (62)

In the second edition of *West Indian and Other Recipes* the connection between culinary and print cultures -- and their consumers -- is made most explicit in a half page advert for the *Barbados Advocate*, the newspaper established in 1895 and hailed as "the only Medium of Effective Advertising In the Island". A whole page advert for Da Costa & Co. Ltd., Commission and General Merchants, Steamship and Insurance Agents and Ship Chandlers, shows how far Caribbean islands such as Barbados still depended on the importation of foreign foods, unlike other islands such as Grenada, where different agricultural practices based on a greater cultural acceptance of locally-produced food crops (including ground provisions), led to a more robust degree of self-sufficiency (Franklyn 2007, 67-75 Da Costa & Co. Ltd. declare themselves, in an advert in this edition:

> shippers of choice Molasses and fancy Molasses (syrup), [...] importers of European, Canadian, American and East Indian Foodstuffs, Fish and other produce [and] universal suppliers of dry Goods, clothing, furniture, hardware and every household Requisite; Groceries, tobaccos, wines and other Spirits, ships stores, etc. (1932, n.p.)

Clearly overseas foodstuffs were in demand, and as Sarah Lawson Welsh (2014) has shown, they were often regarded as prestige or luxury items, something which dates right back to the white expatriate planters and their tables. Read against the wider context of the economic

situation in the Caribbean by the early 1930s, this trade is even more exceptional. Many sugar plantations were failing as international sugar prices fell, and a world-wide depression hit certain Caribbean islands very badly indeed. Indeed, in the mid 1930s in Barbados, Trinidad and other British colonies, a combination of factors led to labour riots as islanders variously fought against poverty and hunger and for employment, a liveable wage and access to agricultural land traditionally owned and controlled by the colonial elite.

In this second edition, in another half-page advert for "Anchor New Zealand butter", the buying public is significantly identified not as Barbadian but British; J.N. Goddard & Sons promises "British Butter for the British Public". Nominally, all Barbadian subjects were British subjects as citizens of a British colony with strong links to the culture of the metropolis; however, this interpellation may also suggest that at least a minority of the Euro-Creole population of Barbados still regarded themselves as British rather than Barbadian or West Indian. Moreover, the introduction of technological changes which made possible the shipping of refrigerated goods such as this may also have consolidated a more colonial sense of self for the elite, rather than a West Indian or Barbadian identity, especially after the First World War, an event which itself consolidated a notion of 'imperial togetherness'.[8]

A culture of respectability

Despite its wonderful eccentricity when viewed from a 21st-century perspective, Yearwood's text reflects and affirms a set of clear values which were key to a culture of respectability for the white elite and attractive to an aspiring middle class in Barbados in the early years of the 20th century. These include values of economy and frugality, closely connected to a particular morality of parsimony and self-restraint. O'Brien argues that certain cookbooks in an Australian colonial context, such as Edward Abbot's (1864) *The English and Australian Cookery Book: Cookery for the Many, as Well as for the "Upper Ten Thousand"*: "professed

[…] to be for the “many” [but] largely reads as a representation of the lifestyle of the elite, or the “upper ten thousand” of the book’s title” (O’Brien 2016, 138).

This was also likely to be the position of Yearwood’s text: in the Preface Yearwood professes a certain inclusivity, and indeed her text does include recipes for a number of characteristically West Indian dishes, in all probability accessed via the conduit of black cooks working in the kitchen of the white elite and by collection of other word of mouth recipes, but ultimately the recipe book is primarily an affirmation of the “lifestyle of the [white] elite” of Barbados. O’ Brien continues:

> There were colonial Australians who aspired to ape the aristocratic mode of living but the majority of the population did not have the resources, leisure time, or servants to lead such a lifestyle and their ambitions were those of the growing middle class. They valued work and deriving success from personal effort, ensuring respectability through display of manners and morals and maintaining an ear best public façade. The middle-class colonial housewife seeking cookery instruction needed practical manuals focused on day-to-day concerns relevant to her life and the restraints of preparing meals for a family. (2016, 138)

In Australia, as in Barbados in the late 19th century and early decades of the 20th century:

> There was a prevailing idea that frugality and morality were connected and wasting food was considered immoral, the colonial housewife would felt some social pressure to demonstrate parsimony in how she provisioned her family, but the cost of food took up more of the family budget than it does now making kitchen economy a necessary focus for the colonial cook. (138–139)

It is likely that many of Yearwood’s contributors and subscribers were in a rather more fortunate position economically, but the recipe book may well have also been bought as

an aspirational text. In the case of the second edition of the text, the pressure to be frugal may well have been an even greater force as the First World War affected imports to the Caribbean and in the early 1930s worldwide economic depression reached the Caribbean. Nonetheless, it seems that Yearwood's intended audience was rather different in terms of class and ethnicity from those Afro-Creole families Austin Clarke describes in *Breadfruit n' Pigtails* as "making do" and valuing economy (1999, 24). Indeed, his childhood memory of Hastings, Barbados in the 1930s is of a place where such distinctions were made very clear:

> black nursemaids walked huge blue perambulators filled with white English children [...] the offspring of the local Barbadian whites, as well as those of the few foreigners, as we called them, who came to the island to rule over us, in school, in church, in the civil service, in the police force and in banks. […] Barbados in the late 1930s and 40s was a place of severe order and discipline and training, to make you know your place. (7)

Conclusion

Mrs Yearwood's cookbook is clearly an important early text. However, we do need to apply a few caveats when reading this as a historical document of culinary culture in Barbados in the early decades of the 20th century. As O'Brien points out, individual cookbooks do not necessarily represent what the wider colonial population was eating at any given time (2016, 136). As she suggests:

> Recipe books are often aspirational and set out an ideal cuisine. What is contained within them can be the author's idea of what they think their audience should be cooking and eating to achieve some end be it gastronomic, health-related, social advancement, or to promote their own interests. Someone might purchase a cookbook because it contains instruction on what they think they should be cooking or what they

> want to be eating more than it mirrors what they are actually preparing and consuming, one will ever cook and eat. Yet the impermanent nature of food materials and the products of cooking mean that cookery books remain as the key source of information about the food of the past providing insight into the particular individual who put a work together, the intended audience, the cultural environment of the time, and the culinary evolution, or otherwise, of a society. Cookbooks can influence what people choose to prepare in their kitchens and serve at their tables, and over time this can shape a food culture. (136–137)

West Indian and Other Recipes is a key text in opening up greater awareness of the foodways, culinary mores and consumer habits (aspirational or not) of the "white elite" Eurocreole and colonial expatriate community of Barbados in the early decades of the 20th century. Through this rare example, an early West Indian cookery book existing within a primarily oral culinary culture, we can glimpse some of the ways in which the white elite asserted its identity by performing a complex set of cultural and economic allegiances to Britain and Britishness, as defined through a nexus of colonial connections. Through a reading of its paratexts, we can also see how *West Indian and Other Recipes* reveals not only the networks of an established white elite but also a growing black and mixed-race middle class who aspired to gain cultural and culinary capital by consuming certain material goods as a sign of their upward social mobility. Such "paratextual elements of the [cookbook] provide a wealth of information about the material conditions of [cookery] writing, reading, printing and publishing in the West Indies, which in turn, shape our understanding of the [culinary culture] of the early decades of the twentieth-century." (Irving, 203). Ultimately, Mrs Yearwood's cookbook acts as both a "missive and [a] commodity to be bought" (Irving, 178) as well as signaling the close relationship of print culture in this period to the wider "world of business" (Irving, 204).

Notes

[1] This wry and provocative statement comes from Mrs Yearwood's Preface to her cookbook. The second edition was published posthumously and remains exactly the same in both editions.
[2] Mrs Bessie Yearwood (1849-1915) was married to Mr Graham Yearwood. He and his brother were member of the Barbados Assembly in 1914 and were living at Friendship Hall in St Michael's Parish. Mrs Yearwood's family came from St George's Parish Barbados, although her paternal grandfather, Mr Jasper M. Manning, had been born in England and her father, Mr Charles Jasper Manning, had been educated at Oxford University in the 1860s.
[3] *The Advocate* newspaper was also established in this year and is still published today. It is the longest continuously-published newspaper in Barbados.
[4] Comprising: Miss Anderson, Mrs Austin, Mrs G. Brown, Mrs Bovell, Mrs J. Bovell, Miss Briggs, Mrs J. Brown, Mrs Browne, Mrs Cotton, Mrs E.T. Cox, Miss Crone, Mrs W.C Clarke, Miss E.T. Cox, Mrs H. Deighton, Mrs Foderingham, Mrs L.Greaves, Miss Hammond, Cook Harris, H Haynes, Mrs Hobson, Mrs J. Howell, Mrs Lawson, Mrs Lawrence, Mrs J. Manning, Mrs T. Manning, Mrs Manning, Miss Packer, Miss Parloa, Miss H. Philips, Mrs Phillips, Miss G. Richards, Miss Sanderson, Mrs Simpson, Miss Skinner, Mrs J. Thomas, Mrs C. Trimmingham, Miss R. Wheatley, H.G. Yearwood. My copy of the 1911 edition was owned by a Miss C. Camplin and my copy of the 1932 edition by an Ava B. Booth, who notes the place as Barbados and the date as 1935.
[5] This is the classic cornmeal cou cou, but cou cou can also be made from the pounded dried flour of green plantains (known as conquintay flour), or from flours made from cassava or breadfruit. Winifred Grey (1965) notes that "cassava coo-coo and cornmeal coo-coo can be made to the same recipe. They are much the same as the American johnnycake and can be served as a side dish at lunch, or cold coo-coo can be cut into slices and fried. In Jamaica, coo-coo is called 'Stamp and Go'" (203). In the Dutch Antilles cou cou is known as funchi and in Haiti as Tum tum. The larger history of cou cou includes its relationship to couscous. The Brazilian version, called cuscuz, can similarly be made with the corn to accompany a stew. I am indebted to Dr Ross Forman for his careful reading and this latter point.

[6] I am indebted to Dr Ross Forman for this observation.
[7] The first three of these brands still exist. Van Houten's was established in Holland in 1828 whilst Runkle's is American in origin and dates from the early 20th century.
[8] I am indebted to Dr Ross Forman for the basis of this final point.

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